

Public stigma toward depression decreased from 2006 to 2018

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(HealthDay)—Public stigma toward depression seems to have decreased,

according to a study published online Dec. 21 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Bernice A. Pescosolido, Ph.D., from Indiana University in Bloomington, and colleagues used data collected from the U.S. National Stigma Studies to examine the nature, direction, and magnitude of population-based changes in U.S. mental illness [stigma](#). A total of 1,438, 1,520, and 1,171 individuals ages 18 years or older were interviewed in 1996, 2006, and 2018, respectively.

The researchers found that in 1996 to 2006, respondents endorsing scientific attributions for schizophrenia, [depression](#), and [alcohol dependence](#) increased (11.8, 13.0, and 10.9 percent, respectively). The desire for [social distance](#) decreased for depression in work, socializing, friendship, family marriage, and group home (18.1, 16.7, 9.7, 14.3, and 10.4 percent, respectively) in the later period (2006 to 2018). Change was inconsistent and sometimes regressive, particularly for dangerousness for schizophrenia (15.7 percent increase from 1996 to 2018) and bad character for alcohol dependence (18.2 percent increase from 1996 to 2018). Change seemed to be consistent with age and generational shifts among two birth cohorts (1937 to 1946 and 1987 to 2000).

"With indications that the level of stigma may be reducing, strategies to identify factors associated with the decrease in stigma for depression, to address stagnation or regression in other disorders, and to reach beyond current scientific limits are essential to confront mental illness's contribution to the global burden of disease and improve [population health](#)," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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